
M^r YOUNG's
TWO
SERMONS
A T
WHITE-HALL.

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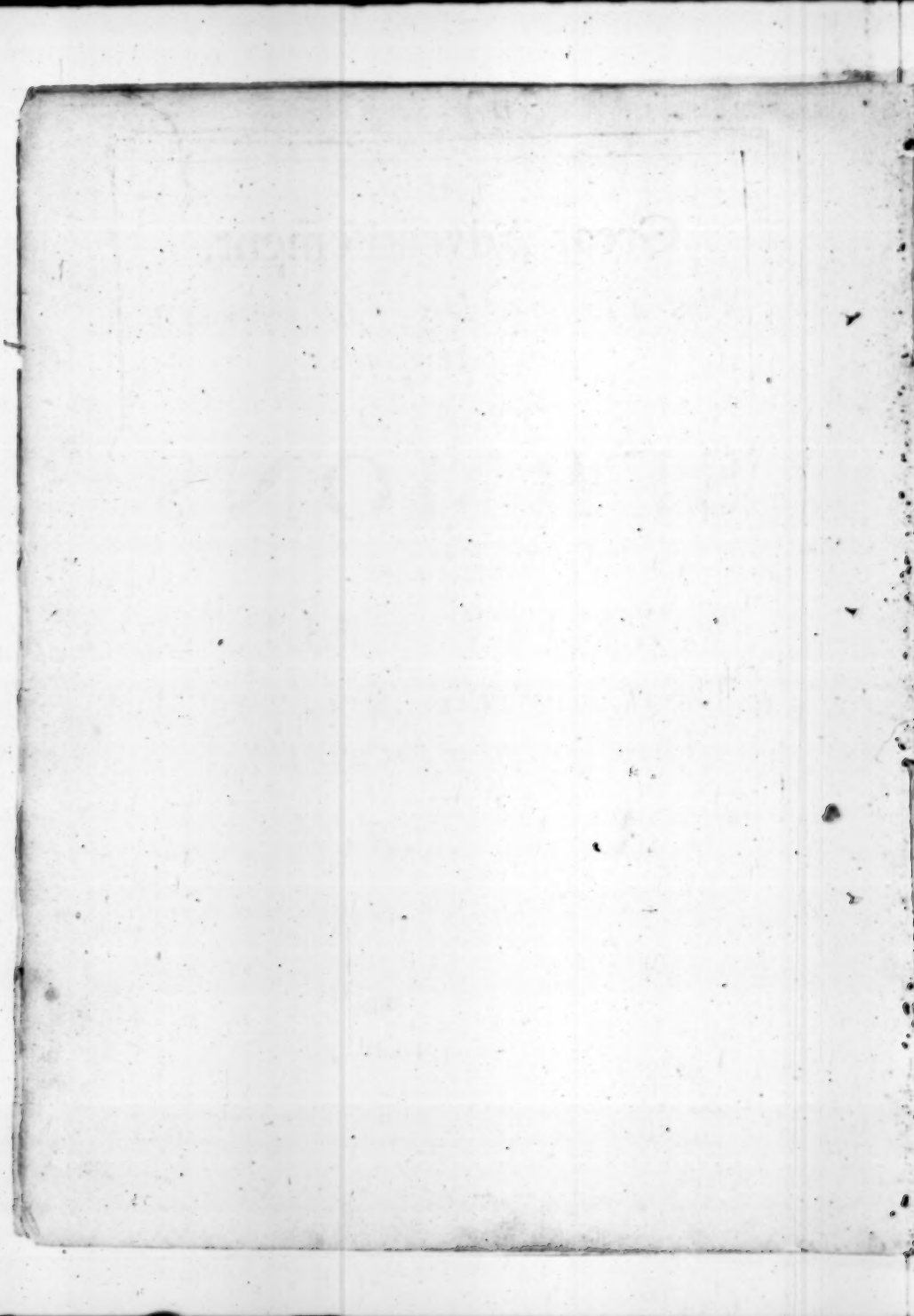
THE
Great Advertisment,
*That a Religious Life is the best way to
present Happiness :*
IN TWO
SERMONS

Preach'd at
WHITE-HALL,
The 1st. on *Sunday, April the 15th.*
The 2^d on *Sunday, Apr. 22. 1694.*

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Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

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L O N D O N,
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SERMON I.

Pfalm xxxvii. 4.

*Delight thou in the Lord , and he shall
give thee thy heart's desire.*

THere are Two Opinions which the Devil has been always busy to propagate in the World , as the Two main Pillars of his Kingdom : The First is That a Sinful Life is a State of True Liberty, and sincere Pleasures, and happy Advantages ; The Second is (on the contrary) That a Religious Life is a Servile and Uncomfortable State.

He made the first Breach upon humane Innocence by the former of these Suggestions ; when he told *Eve*, That by Eating of the Tree of Knowledge *she should be as God*, that is, she should reap some high and strange felicity from doing that which was forbidden her to do. But we know the Success : *Eve* learnt the difference between Good and

Evil by her Transgression, which she knew not before ; but she learnt the Difference to be this, That Good is that that gives the Mind pleasure and assurance ; and Evil is that that must necessarily be attended, sooner or later, with shame and sorrow.

As he thus began his Kingdom, so he has carried it on ever since by the same Imposture ; that is, by possessing mens minds with vast expectations of the present Incomes of Sin ; and making them dream of golden Mountains, mighty gratifications and advantages they shall meet with in following their Appetites the forbidden way. Whereas on the contrary, there are Seasons wherein all Sinners are ready to confess, that their Counsellour has been a Deceiver, that their Foolish Hearts have been darkned , that their Hopes have been Vain, their Gains no Profit, and all their Enjoyments leading to Bitterness. So little trust is to be given to all the promising Overtures of Sin.

To promote the second Opinion, That a Religious Life is a Servile and Uncomfortable State, the Devil suggests to our thoughts, That true Freedom is to follow our own Humour ; That to deny our Appetites is to be Miserable ;

Miserable ; That not to prosecute our Passions is to be Cowards; That to ty our selves up to Truth and Justice is to have no Liberty ; That to live by moderate and prescribed Rules is to have no Joy ; and therefore that when the Religious Man looks for Joy, he can only see it at the tedious distance of a Future Life : Which were it true, our Nature that is so importunately goaded on with the desire of present Happiness, could not but languish under the discouragement of so Remote an Expectation. But in the mean time the Holy Scriptures give us a quite different prospect of this matter : there we are told, that the *service of God is true Liberty*; that the *Yolk of Christ is easy*, in comparison of that which any other Form of Living will bring upon us ; that *Religion has Pleasantness in its ways*, as well as Glory in its End ; that it will bring us in *Peace and Joy, such as the World cannot give* ; and therefore that the Religious Man's Joy does not stand at so tedious a distance, but is so present and at hand that it may be felt and tasted every moment. And a Summary Confirmation of all this we meet with in the words of the Text : Where we have Religion

gion described both in its State, and in its Fruit; and recommended to us in both from that which we so much long for. *Delight thou in the Lord*, this is the State of Religion; *and he shall give thee thy Heart's Desire*, This is the Fruit of Religion; even its Present Fruit: Now where there is Delight for the Principle, and Attainment of Desires for the Income, we have little reason to suspect that such a State can either be Servile or Uncomfortable.

The Words therefore lead me to assert the great Advantages of a Religious Life; and to recommend it from the influence it has upon our present well-being: And this is the Point I shall pursue, and pass to the Evidence of it by the steps of these Three Propositions, *viz.*

- I. That to *Delight in God* is our most reasonable Duty.
- II. That to *Delight in God* is the True State of Religion. And
- III. That to *Delight in God* is the happiest Method of compassing all our Ends; as is imply'd in this Promise or Assertion, *He shall give thee thy heart's Desire.*

I. That

I. That to delight in God is our most Reasonable Duty. We may observe that none of the Voluntary Actions of Men, whether Good or Evil, can have any Life or long continuance, unless they are supported by some Kind of Delight. Even sinful actions will cease; when we come *to have no pleasure in them*: And hence it comes to pass, that many Men have forsaken particular Sins, without ever Repenting of them; forsaking them only from the Principle of a Carnal disgust: And if Sinful Actions will cease without the support of Delight, much more will Religious, to which we have so much less both of Power and Propension. Forasmuch therefore as there are many Offices of Religion which cannot be in themselves the proper matter of Delight; we must either delight in Him for whose sake we do them, that is, in God; or else we must necessarily sink from their performance.

Now to Delight in God is to possess our Minds with such a proper sense of his Goodness, as may be able to produce an habitual comfort and pleasure in the Contemplation of Him. And this is a matter so practicable,

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that the only reason why it is not done, is because we do not set about it. For let us but consider what it is that makes us take delight in any thing: It is only this, First to conceive a thing as Good, and secondly to conceive that Good thing as Ours; and then it is impossible but that such a thing should delight us. Now all allow that we have no Notion worthy of God, unless we conceive him to be the chiefest Good; nor have we any notion worthy of his Truth, unless we likewise conceive him to be Ours: For by the Christian Covenant he has engaged himself to be Our God, that is, the Author of all Good unto us. And therefore God, infinitely Good as he is, is more certainly Ours, than any thing that the World can most hopefully promise us; For in respect of any such thing many accidents may interpose to prevent our possession of it: Nay God is more Safely Ours, than any thing of the World that we possess; for that Possession is defeisable; it may, it must determine in a little while: But God is Ours Certainly, Safely, Everlastingly; unless we consent to part with our Title, unless we will not that he should be Ours. Now who
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can doubt but that under this Contemplation God is the most proper Object of our Delight ?

That we can delight in God is our peculiar Privilege ; it is both the Honour and the Happiness of our Nature : For as our Nature is endow'd with a Capacity to apprehend God , so it is that Capacity alone that gives us preference above the Beasts that perish : For abstracting from this our Power of Knowing, and contemplating, and enjoying God , there is no Evidence, that we are more Wise ; much Evidence there is that we are less Happy than they.

But to shew more fully what Reason we have to delight in God , I shall make the Comparison betwixt God and all other delectable things , and argue from the respective Consideration of all those things, that if they are to be delighted in, God is more so.

All the delectable things that we can either know or imagine, we may range under these Three Kinds , Natural, Moral, and Heavenly : In the First consist the Pleasures of the World ; In the Second consist the Pleasures of the Good ; and in the Third

consist the Pleasures of the Blessed : And my purpose is to shew that each of these three do point us out to God as a far better and more transcendent Delight.

1. I begin with the Delectable things of Nature.

Wonderful is the Variety of those things in Nature that are accommodated to our Liking ; and their power to delight us we acknowledge too much by the power we usually give them over our Affections : And yet all these things do point us to seek after something Better ; as our own Hearts will tell us, so often as we seriously think of the Emptiness of all natural Delights ; and how by reason either of their offensive Mixtures, or necessary Decay , they leave our Souls lean and pining in the midst of their Enjoyments. And this is an Argument that God himself insists upon, *Isa. 58.* Where he complains of his People That *They had forsaken Him, the Fountain of Living Water , and had hewn to themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that would hold no Water.* The Words are very full and curious in their matter. For (1.) God representing himself by the Emblem of a *Fountain of living water*, intimates, That
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He is the only Source of solid Refreshment, of sincere and lasting Delectation, and such as is adequate to the measure of the longings of our Soul: And, (2.) That all that will, may come freely to these Waters, because they flow freely towards All; and whoever do come to them, that is, whoever do cleave unto God by Contemplation and Desire, shall be sure to find their desired Refreshment in him: But, (3.) that Men, hurried away by their own foolish Choices, come to distrust and forsake God *the Fountain*, and *hew unto themselves Cisterns*: Hewing Cisterns out of the Rock is hard Labour; and it implies the great Pains Men take to seek out the Waters of Comfort in Worldly Methods; but when all is done, *Their Cisterns will hold no water*: The *Water* they catch is not *Living*, it is Pall'd and Foul; and yet such as it is it will not tarry with them: their Worldly Methods fail them deplorably, for all the Pleasures they bring in are Heavy and Polluting, and by and by they will be none at all.

When *Solomon* gave his heart a Loose into worldly Delights, he thus expresses it---- *I gave my Heart to know Madneß and Folly;*
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Madness and Folly : All those Delights that are Irregular and Sinful in their matter are pure Madness. That *Demoniack* the Gospel tells us of, that he pleased himself to *dwell among the tombs*, and there to *cry and cut himself with stones*, had not a more Compassionable Delight than the Sinner has : his Delights are pure *Madness*. And as for the Common Delights that entertain us with greater Innocence, yet these are no better than *Folly* : The usual Diversions of Men have nothing more solid in them than the Toys of Children ; and they seem to take all their Commendation, as they do their Name, from *Passing away Time* : As if Time laid so heavy upon our hands, that we were beholden to any thing, that may help to take it off. Whereas were but more of our Time devoted to Pious Offices, so that our Souls might be wrought into habitual Reflections upon God, and the Amiability of his Nature, and the Sweetness of his Favour, and the Excellence of his Promises ; how would the whole pass more Chearfully, Usefully, Accountably ? And how should we be able to look more like our selves, that is, Erect and Rational ?

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I do not deny but that the Accommodations of Life from the Goods of Fortune, from the Diversions of the Mind, and from the regular Gratifications of our Senses, do bring in matter of real Delight: But then, Are not all these the Blessings of God? And therefore so long as we pretend to Reason; as well as Sense, How is it possible we can delight in these good things, and not with-all delight in God as their Author; from whose Goodness proceeds both all we have, and all we hope for? Be sure that if we cannot take delight in the Supream Good, all we take delight in besides will directly rise up in Judgment against us, and condemn our Choice from the very Principles of our Chusing.

But moreover, we must acknowledge thus much farther concerning all Natural Delights (*viz.*) That they are Deceitful in the Use: For they serve us only when we have least need of them; not in the Bitterness of Affliction, not in the Destitutions of the Soul. Whereas a Spiritual Commerce with God, which breeds a sure Hope in him, is a steady Enjoyment that no Accidents can interrupt: For it will stick by us, when both Objects
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and Appetites shall cease; when all other desireable things, and *the very Desire it self shall fail.* In the multitude of sorrows his comforts will refresh us; says the Psalmist: *It is God our Maker, that giveth songs in the night;* says *Elihu in Job.* i. e. That giveth Comfort in the night of Affliction, and in the gloominess of humane Despair: As it was at that time *Job's own Case.*

I have thus far taken a view of the State of all Natural Delights, to shew, How their Emptiness does properly point and remit us unto God for something better and more satisfying: And to this I shall only add one Reflection out of the Prophet *Habbakuk*, where he says, *Is it not from the Lord that the People weary themselves for vanity?* Here he stiles all worldly things by the Name of Vanity or Emptiness; And he does not mean it is from God, that Men pursue these worldly things; This is from their own Appetites: Nor does he mean, it is from God that Men *weary* themselves in that pursuit; This is from their own Folly: But he means that the Emptiness of those things they weary themselves about. *This is from the Lord:* that is, *God* has purposely designed, that
worldly

worldly things should not be satisfying, nor able to answer that importunate desire of Happiness which he has made Connatural to the Soul of Man. Now since God has given Man such a Desire, and withal put no capacity in things here below to answer it, and yet has certainly made nothing in vain; It is a Demonstration, That He intended himself to fill up the measure of our Desires, and to be Himself that Delight which we long for.

2. I pass to examine the Delights of *Vertue*, or *Moral Delights*: And from these we may learn the same Instruction.

Moral Delight is that which springs from the Conscience of *Well-doing*: And though this be a Pleasure that properly belongs to the Good; yet ev'n the Vicious can hardly be insensible of it; because it may be felt to spring from any Single or Casual Act of *Vertue*. As for Example; Let a Man but refresh the Bowels of the needy, or comfort the afflicted, or check an Appetite, or overcome a Temptation, or forgive an Injury, or receive an Affront with Temper and Meekness, and he shall immediately find the tacit Praise of what he has done, darting
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through his Mind, accompanied with a sincere Delectation. And thus Conscience plays the *Monitor* ev'n to the Loose and Unregenerate in their most Casual Acts of *Well-doing*; and is like a voice whispering behind them, and saying, *This is the way, walk in it.* But when the Principles come once to be fixt in a Man, and his Vertue to be habitual and uniform; this never fails to be followed with a stable Serenity and Pleasure; and a Satisfaction not to be equalled by all the Joys of Sensuality. And this it was that made the honest *Heathens* preferre *Conscience* before *Appetite*; and stile it their Solace, their Riches, their Haven, their Wall of Brass; as being sufficient, not only to recreate and please them, but likewise to support them in Trouble, and to balance the Spight of ill Fortune.

Now if Conscience may thus be delighted in, my Argument runs, How much more reasonably may God be delighted in, who is the Rewarder of Conscience? Especially when we consider, that this Delight springing from Conscience, is nothing else but a boding Instinct, that there shall be a future Reward. And undoubtedly it is nothing else:
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For otherwise, were the Verdict of our Consciences not accompanied with such a boding Apprehension, it were impossible that it should amount to a Delight: that is, The Conscience of Vertue could never amount to be a Delight unto us, were it not accompanied with the apprehension of a Future Reward of Vertue. For as no ill Man fears from himself, *i. e.* no ill Man fears lest at any time hereafter he should come into the mind of punishing himself; So likewise no good Man hopes from himself, that he at any time hereafter shall be at the Discretion of rewarding himself: And therefore the simple Verdict of our Consciences upon good or evil Actions, would never be able to produce Hope or Fear, Joy or Grief; were it not for this further Apprehension, That there is a *God*, who knows all as well as we, and who will take care some time or other to make Distributions accordingly. And thus Conscience was always an implicit Proclamation of *God* unto the Hea-then.

I know it may be alledged, That, without this Apprehension of a Future Reward, a Man might delight in the very Practice

and Exercise of Vertue; because Vertue is no small Reward unto its self, in its immediate Consequences; nay, though nothing else were to follow, yet a Man might please himself in the Conscience of this, *viz.* That he had acted suitably to Reason. But this is an Argument so fine spun, that it serves rather for *Ostentation* than for *Use*. I know indeed there are some Vertues of such a Nature, that a Man may take pleasure in the very Exercise of them; such as are Beneficence and Justice, and the like; Vertues that carry Glory along with them, and make the Man that exercises them look Great, and bring in Praise and Blessing as a concomitant Reward: And therefore we may meet with many Instances of Men, who have been glorious in these Vertues; not as Vertues, but as they are Lures of Reputation and Fame; and at the same time continued very vicious in other Respects. But (on the other hand) as for all passive Vertues, such as Self-denial and Patience, and the like, their very Matter being not *joyous* but *Grievous*, it is impossible they should be practised with Delight for their own sakes, but only in prospect and expectation of a
Future

Future Recompence. And this is the Reason that we find in the *Gospel-Writings*, It is not their usual Method to urge and inculcate Vertue from the *Topicks* of concomitant Rewards; lest the Foundation being too narrow, might give occasion of Offence to those who should rest too much upon it; but they urge Vertue from the Prospect of Heaven, and the Hopes of that Glory and Immortality which *God* has reserved for it. Indeed it is truly said, That the Man who acts *suitably to Reason* may find Content and Satisfaction in himself for having so done, tho' no other Advantage were to follow: But then we must consider, that, abstracting from this Notion of a Future Reward, no Man would act suitably to Reason in any thing that brought upon him a Temporal Inconvenience; nor would there be any Reason for Vertue farther, than as it might succeed to be presently advantageous; and the same Reason there would be as well for Vice. And this the Apostle expressly argues, 1 *Cor.* 15. 30. 32.

The Inference I make from the whole that has been said upon this Head, is this, That there is a necessary Relation between

God

God and our *Consciences*; Inſomuch that whenever we conceive any Pleaſure upon the Remembrance of any thing well done, that pleaſurable Movement of our Conſcience is a Natural Call to us to delight in *God*; who is the ſole Foundation, and Hope, and Reward of Conſcience.

And this gives me occaſion to reflect upon two ſorts of Men: ſome there are who pretend to pleaſe themſelves with the Offices of Conſcience, as that they keep their Words, and ſtand to their Contracts, and injure no Man; though in the mean time they are very careleſs of *God*: And ſome, on the other hand, pretend to delight in *God*, and make their boaſt in Religion, tho' in the mean time they make bold to wave the Offices of a good Conſcience. The firſt of theſe are guilty of great Abſurdity, and the ſecond of as great Abſurdity, but greater Scandal. For from this neceſſary Relation between *God* and our *Conſciences*, it follows, That our Regard to either cannot poſſibly be ſupported without an equal regard to the other. If we pretend to delight in *Conſcience*, we have no Reason to do ſo, but only this, that *God* is a *Rewarder of Conſcience*:
and

and if we pretend to delight in *God*, we have no Reason to do so, but only this, Ev'n the Testimony of our Conscience, that we have a Title to his Reward: And therefore as they who neglect *God*, have no Foundation for the Repose of Conscience; so they who neglect Conscience have no Foundation for Complacency in *God*.

3. And now I come to the last kind of delectable things, those of Heaven: A state so happy and pleasurable, that the Apostle tells us, the very Expectation of it is sufficient to work in us a *rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. No Man has so mean a Conception of that State, but that he must needs wish it; and though never so sensual, desire it in Exchange of all his present Enjoyments. Bring one that will say, he could not delight in Heaven; and I have nothing to urge to such a one why he should delight in God. But if Heaven be to be delighted in, God is more. For if we look into the bottom of the Notion, we shall find, that Heaven is no other in effect than God himself; and that God is not only the Rewarder, but the very Reward, of those that seek him. Accordingly we shall find in the Holy Scriptures, that

that all the Joys of Heaven are defined with Relation to God; and *the Seeing of God* is declared to be the Root and Foundation of Eternal Beatitude: From whence the *Schools* have stiled it the *Beatifick Vision*. Not to mention other Texts to this purpose, Our Saviour says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God*; And St. *John* yet more expressly to our matter, *1 Epist. 3. 2. We shall be like him, for we shall see him*: where the being like God, *i. e.* the Participation of a Blis and Glory like to the *Divine* is expressed to be the formal Happiness of Saints; but their causal Happiness to be their *Seeing of him*. I therefore propose to determine what is meant in these Texts by *seeing God*; and the doing of that will sufficiently confirm the Argument I am upon.

And (1.) As the *Essence* of God is purely *Immaterial*, and therefore *Invisible*, so the *Seeing of God* can be no other than *Intellectual*, and performed by an Act of the Mind, in comprehending and knowing what that *Essence* is. And that this Knowledge of God shall hereafter be compleat in all Saints, the Apostle intimates, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* where he says, *Now I know in part, but then I shall know,*

know, even as also I am known. As if he had said; Even I, though I have been wrapt up into the *Third Heavens*, and there admitted into Inutterable Secrets, yet even I hitherto have but a partial and imperfect Knowledge of the wonderful Things of God; but *Then*, when I shall be possess'd of my Interest in the future State, *Then* I (with all other Saints) shall know God, as also I am known; i. e. as perfectly as God knows me: He would not say, I shall know God as perfectly as I know my self; this had been too short a measure, because no Man knows himself but imperfectly; but as God knows me; i. e. *Then* I shall know all the Wonders of his Essence, all the Beauty of his Perfections, all the Reasons of his Providence, all the Treasures of his Wisdom, all the Riches of his Goodness; I shall know them thoroughly and exactly. Now he who is any way sensible what a Pleasure strikes through the Soul of Man upon the Discovery of any curious Secret, or the Attainment of any important Knowledge, will easily allow, that such a Knowledge of God must needs be a more transporting Entertainment, than any can be

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imagin'd within the bounds of Nature. This is the Intellectual Vision of God.

But (2.) We have no Reason to deny, but that the Saints shall likewise have a *Bodily* and *Sensible Vision* of God. For although God's Essence be Invisible, yet there is a Glory, which is as it were the Train and Attendance of his Essence. (By the Psalmist's Authority, I may call it the *Garment* or *Cloathing* of his Essence; for so says the Psalmist of God, *Who decketh himself with light as with a garment*: and by the Apostle's Authority I may call it the *Dwelling* or *Palace* of his Essence; for so says the Apostle concerning God, *Who dwelleth in light that is unapproachable*:) and this Glory or Majesty of God is such as we must allow to be properly visible. And therefore there is a Distinction between the Essential and the Majestatick Presence of God: For his Essential Presence is Infinite; and so every where, and every where unseen; but ont he contrary, his Majestatick Presence is the Notifying or Discovery of his Essential Presence in a determinate Place, by some kind of magnificent luminous Appearance: And this we know has been accommodated and brought down
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to the perception even of Mortal Eyes. Thus the *Glory of God* is said to have appeared on *Mount Sinai six days together*: And afterwards in the Sanctuary it is said to have rested and dwelt, because of its long and uninterrupted continuance there: And at the Dedication of the Temple it is said to have filled the house; And at the Birth of our Saviour it is said to have shone round the Shepherds; And at his Transfiguration in the Mount St. Peter tells us, *There came a voice ἀπὸ τοῦ μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, from the excellent Glory.* And hence it has come to pass, that the word *Glory*, besides its common Meaning, is used technically in the Art of the Painters, to signify a luminous Radiation, or circular Darting of Light. Now all these I have mentioned are Instances of the Majestatick and Visible Presence of God. And this manner of Vision the Apostle seems to have respected in that passage, *1 Cor. 13. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, i. e.* In this Life (according to the course of ordinary Dispensations) we can only see the *Glory of God* in its Shadow and Reflexion from the *Glass* of his *Creatures*; and they who have had the vouch-

saſement to ſee it *directly*, have rather found it to be an Aſtoniſhment than a Sight; And he who had the moſt familiar vouchſaſement of this kind, that is, *Mofes*, could only ſee the *Back Parts*, *i. e.* ſome ſmall meaſure and ſcantlings of it; becauſe the weakneſs of *Mortal Eyes* can bear no more: But *Then*, when *this Mortal ſhall have put on Immortality*, when the Bodies of Saints ſhall be inveſted with the New Powers of Spirituality and Incorruption, *Then face to face*; *Then* we ſhall be able to ſee the whole Luſtre of his Majeſty as familiarly as one Man beholdeth the face of another. Now as we muſt allow, that the grateful Objects of Senſe do make up a great part of humane Delectation; ſo we cannot doubt, but that this *Glory of God* being ſo accommodated to our Senſes, will produce a more raviſhing and transcendent Delight, than all the Objects in Nature are capable of producing.

THESE are Two ways of *Seeing God*, by Intelligence, and (in ſome manner) by Senſe.

But I do not imagine, that theſe Two make up the *Beatific Viſion*, or are the whole and adæquate Cauſe of the *Beatitude*
of

of Saints ; There being yet Another Cause of more Importance to Beatitude than both these. For undoubtedly it is not so much the Sight and Contemplation of the Divine Glories (which is Our Act) as the Communication of those Glories (which is God's Act) that makes the Saints so perfectly Blessed. Because it is from this Communication that they come to be *Θεοὶ καὶ οὐνοὶ φύσας* (as St. Peter words it) not bare Spectators, but *Partakers of the Divine Nature ; i. e.* Partakers of such a Bliss and Glory as resembles the Divine. I may illustrate this matter by a Similitude obvious to our Senses. *Truly Light is sweet, says Ecclesiastes, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the Sun ; A pleasant thing it is to Behold the Sun, as they who came out of a dark confinement will readily confess : But then when we consider that the Sun is the Cheer and Vigour of Nature, and the very Life of all Animal and Vegetable Beings ; think how much more Man is obliged to the Sun for his Influences, than for his Sight : And so much more are the Heavenly Inhabitants obliged to God for their Receptions from him as the Fountain of Life, than for the Sight and Contemplation of him as the Subject of Perfection.* And

And therefore we may make a Third Interpretation of *Seeing God*; and that is to signify the *Enjoyment of him*. And in this sense the Word *Seeing* is often used in Scripture: As in these Phrases, *To see Good*, to *see Life*, and to *see good days*, by *Seeing* is meant *Enjoying*: And thus the *seeing* of God signifies the *Enjoying* of God; through the Communications of his Goodness, the Beamings of his Favour, and the Effusions of his Love; passing through the whole Man, and producing an intimate sensation of him both in Body and Soul, and filling both with an unconceivable and endless Delectation. And this St. *John* seems to mean (in the forementioned Text) by *Seeing God As he is*: We shall be like him, for we shall see him *As he is*, *i. e.* We shall see him purely Good and Gracious and Beneficent; for *so he is* in his whole Nature. Indeed we do not see him so Here; for Here we see his Dispensations mixt with Discipline and Punishment and Anger; But these are *Opera Aliena* (as he calls them in the Prophet) Acts not His, but strange and preternatural to him; and such as he Would not, only the Violence of our Contempt forces them from him: But *there shall*

shall be no such Mixture ; There he will appear purely *As he is*, i. e. purely Kind and Good, and Communicative of that Good to all that see him ; and then how can the Vision be otherwise than Beatifying ? Suitably to this the same Apostle in his Vision of the New *Jerusalem*, *Rev.* 21. after he has described it as a Magnificent City, and most precious built, he adds, *That the City had no need of the Sun to lighten it, for the Glory of God is the light thereof* ; Intimating that God is the same Blessing to the Heavenly Inhabitants, as he has constituted the Sun to be to the Inhabitants of the Earth ; the same Blessing in Resemblance, though infinitely greater in Proportion. And accordingly we may observe, that as the Word *light* is used peculiarly to express God, *1 Jo.* 1. 5. so the same Word *Light* is used peculiarly to express Eternal Happiness, *Col.* 1. 12. to confirm the Argument, that God is the Eternal Happiness of the Future Life.

From the whole that has been said upon this Head, we may make this Inference (*viz.*) That it is not the Place Heaven, but rather the God of Heaven that is the Reward of his Saints ; procuring them endless Blessedness

fedness by the Light of his Countenance upon them; and the Influences and Emanations of his Bounty towards them. Which Blessedness that the place it self can no way procure, we may gather from that Instance, *1 Kings 22*. Where we are told, that a *Lying Spirit*, *i. e.* a Devil was in Heaven, mixing himself with the Blessed about the Throne of God; And yet it is certain he was never the Happier for being there; but being deprived of the light of God's Countenance, *i. e.* his Love (which properly makes up the Beatifick Vision) he ev'n there carried his Hell about him. Well therefore and with good reason does the *Psalmist* cry unto God, *Psf. 142. 25. Thou art my Hope and my Portion in the land of the Living*: By the *Land of the Living* he means Heaven; For Earth is no more than the Land of the Dying; I say by the Land of the living he means Heaven, and yet he does not look upon that Land, but meerly upon God in that Land to be his Hope and his Portion. And the Apostle *St. Paul*, speaking of the state of God's Eternal Kingdom, *1 Cor. 15. 28.* clears and determines the whole matter in two words, while he says that in that state *God shall be πάντα ὡς*
πᾶσι,

πάντες, *All in All* ; Every thing to every Saint ;
For All that they can want , All that they
can wish for , All that they can conceive,
God shall be to every one of them.

And now what farther Evidence can I
need to my Conclusion (*viz.*) That if Hea-
ven be to be delighted in , God is more ?
And if God be the Chief thing to be de-
lighted in Hereafter , how Reasonable is it
that he should be delighted in *Now* ? For let
us consider yet farther , If God be not de-
lighted in Now , How shall we be able to
delight in him *Hereafter* ? *Now* must neces-
sarily be the Disposition to *Hereafter*, there
being no Interval that can form any New
Dispositions in Us.

He therefore that will Enter into the
Kingdom of Heaven, let him Enter : Why
stands he at a Distance from the State he
pretends to desire ? Or why looks he for Ano-
ther Opportunity ; whereas there is no other
but the present ? For *Delight in God* is Hea-
ven Begun ; and the Consummation of that
Delight is Heaven in the perfection of Bliss.

ERRATA.

PAGE 12. l. 20. for *Isa.* 58. read *Jer.* 2. 13. and p. 16. l. 15.
for *Habbakuk*, read *Habb.* 2. 13.

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SER-

SERMON II.

Pſalm xxxvii. 4.

*Delight thou in the Lord, and he ſhall
give thee thy heart's deſire.*

IN my former Diſcourſe I propoſed to
inſiſt on the Doctrine of theſe Words,
in theſe *Three* Propoſitions.

I. That to *delight in God* is our moſt Rea-
ſonable Duty.

II. That to *delight in God* is the true State
of Religion.

And III. That to *delight in God* is the
happieſt way to compaſs all our Ends, as is
implied in this Aſſertion, *He ſhall give thee
thy heart's deſire.* So that if that which is
Reaſonable can conclude our Underſtand-
ings; if that which is Religious can affect
our Conſciences; if that which is advan-
tageous and gratifying can move our Affe-

ctions; Delight in God has a proper Claim to all our governing Powers.

The *First* of these Propositions I have already dispatch'd, and therefore shall proceed directly to the *Two* remaining: And,

I. To shew, That to *delight in God* is the true State of Religion.

I am aware that Religion is frequently express'd in Scripture by the name of *Fear*, (*the Fear of God*) a Passion very opposite to Delight: But if we look into the bottom, we find shall that *Fear* is a Duty arising rather from the Respect to our own Nature, which is corrupt, than from the Respect to God's Nature, which being all Goodness, and all Propensity to do good, it requires no more than Love and Delight to express our just Sentiments and Veneration of it. So that *Fear* is not so much the *State*, as the *Guard* of Religion; and a necessary means of restraining our Appetites from offending God, rather than the true and proper Worship of Him. And this we may learn from Mount *Sinai* it self: where to usher in the Delivery of the Law, God presentiated himself in all the Formalities of Terrour; in Thunder and

and Lightning, and Darkneſs, and Fire, and Smoak, and all that was powerful to create an aſtoniſhing Fear; and yet after all this terrible Preface, the Precept it ſelf was only Love; *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*; And this Love is the fulfilling of the Law. Now there is ſo great an Affinity betwixt Love and Delight, that we can hardly diſtinguiſh between them: what we love, we always delight in; and what we delight in, we always love; And if we will diſtinguiſh them as nicely as we can, the Difference is only this; That Love is the Deſire of our Object, and Delight is the Complacency that accompanies that Deſire. So that *delighting in God* is one thought higher both in Worth and Efficacy, than ſimply *loving Him*; becauſe it implies the Activity and Heartineſs of our Affections.

But to clear my Point, That to *delight in God* is the true State of Religion, I ſhall inſiſt upon theſe *Two Arguments*:

1. That to *delight in God* is the only way to expreſs, that we have a juſt Senſe, and worthy Notion of Him: And,
2. That it is the only way to render Him a proper Service.

1. To

1. To Delight in God is the only way to exprefs that we have a juft Senfe and worthy Notion of him.

What notion we ought in Juftice to have of God, I fhall argue from the Confideration of thefe Two familiar things, (1.) The Names that we are entitl'd to call upon him by; and (2.) The common Benefits we receive at his hands.

(1.) God has entitl'd us to call upon him by the name of *Father*, the neareft and moft beneficial and moft indulgent of all Relations: And though there are fome Fathers whofe behaviour might bring the Credit of the Relation into Difpute, Fathers without Affection; yet it cannot be fo with God, whom pure Affection has made him to be our Father; who has drawn us out of the diftance of Aliens and Deftitutes, and brought us near unto himfelf, and adopted us into his Family, and assign'd an Inheritance for us with the Saints in light; fuch a Father cannot but have an Affection more large and inexhauftible, than the moft tender Bowels of the moft tender Sex: And he himfelf exprefly fays as much of himfelf, *If. 49. 15.* Now how is it poffible we can call upon him
by

by this Name, and in the mean time conceive any proper sense of the Name we pronounce, and not withal be convinc'd both of our Obligation and our Privilege to take delight in him?

There is another Name that I must not pass by: God in the third Personality of his amiable Essence specifies himself by the name of *Comforter*: Now is it possible we can have any true notion of a Comforter, and not delight in him? Is not Comfort in it self a Delight? Nay it is the greatest of all Delights in this respect (*viz.*) That it comes in the Season when we have most need of it:

And do not the Exigencies of our Life afford any Seasons wherein Comfort would be welcome? Certainly they do: If then it be necessary to our nature to delight in a Comforter, and yet we do not delight in God, what can be the Reason but that we are sunk away from the notion that God is a Comforter? We have no just sense of his being so: And this is the Cause why we neglect his gracious Influences that would support us in our Exigencies; and betake our selves to Sins and Vanities, which can no otherwise than fail of our design. Remember that

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we condemn the *Socinians* (and we do but our Duty in condemning them) for denying the Holy Ghost ; but remember likewise that we by not delighting in God do in effect deny the Comforter, which is both of equal scandal and prejudice to Christianity.

I might make the same Reflection upon the endearing name of *Saviour*, and so represent the whole Blessed Trinity condescending to our Affections, and courting us to make themselves the subject of our Delight : But I leave this as obvious to your own Meditation to supply, and pass to the Consideration of,

(2.) Those Common Benefits which we receive at the hands of God. *How great is the sum of them ?* Says the *Psalmist*, and how can we say less, when we think upon Life and all its Blessings, upon our Mercies, Comforts, Aids, Preventions, Deliverances ; how great is the sum of those Benefits we enjoy ? Now if we look upon these Benefits, and not look upon God to be their Author, we have no notion of him at all ; And if we delight in these Benefits but cannot delight in God, as their Author, our notion of him is very Irrational. I know there is a Difference between a Benefit

nefit and its Author; and this difference Men often catch at as the Opportunity of their Unthankfulness; while they hugg and rejoice in a Benefit, and in the mean time neglect and vilifie the Benefactour: But remember there is a difference too between the Benefactions of God, and the Benefactions of Men: when a Man bestows a Benefit, we can retain it, and enjoy it in spight of the Donor; because he may want power to call us to account for our Unthankfulness; But God certainly has this power to call us to account, and 'tis as certain that he will execute it. Nay further (to speak accurately) in the Benefactions of God there is no difference between the Benefit and the Author: there is difference indeed between God and the thing he gives; but not between God and the good of that thing; because God himself is properly the Good of every thing he gives: Infomuch that if he but withdraw himself, and turn away his Countenance, though the thing remains, yet the Benefit becomes immediately voided and lost. Thus Life and all its Comforts are the most valuable Benefits, so long as we are thankful to God for them, but when we

cease to be so, they change their nature, and turn into so many Debts, for which we shall be found to be miserably insolvent.

But in the mean time, we all certainly agree in this Point, That it is natural for a Man to delight in that which seems good to him, and consequently in the Causes of such good; *i. e.* in those Natures that are friendly and beneficent: And hence it came to pass, that one of the *Roman* Emperours, *Titus*, because he was a Man of a kind and obliging Spirit, had the Felicity to be fir-named the *Delight of Mankind*. And yet how many of Mankind were there that *Titus's* Benefactions could not reach? And how many that the Confinedness of his Power must necessarily disappoint? But the Favours of God extend universally, his Benefits reach to every particular Person; and his Invitations point us out to far greater Benefits, and no Man ever was, or shall be disappointed by him, that fixed his Trust and Expectations upon him: And how reproachful then must it be to us? And how convictive of our Insensibility, if God cannot arrive to the Honour of being esteemed the *Delight of Mankind*?

2. My

2. My *Second* Argument to prove *Delight in God* the true State of Religion is this, Because that to *delight in God* is the only way to render him a proper Service.

When the Tabernacle was to be made, and the Contribution of the People was necessary to the Work, God's Instruction to *Moses* was this, *Exod. 25. 2. Speak now to the Children of Israel, that they bring me an Offering; of every man that bringeth it willingly, with his heart, ye shall take my Offering:* where observe, All were commanded to bring an Offering, and yet the Offering of none was to be accepted, but what was brought willingly, heartily and freely. And from this Service then required to the House of God, we may learn the Qualification that is necessary to recommend all the Service that we do to God himself; It must be a *Willing Service*. Men indeed that stand in need of Services do oftentimes accept them without regard to the Principle from whence they come; but God, who has no need of any Services that we can do him, always carries an eye to the Principle; and if they come not willingly, and from our heart, they never reach Acceptance with him. Now

nothing can render a willing Service like Delight in our Master: And of this we may make a sad Proof from the Service of Sin: When we serve any irregular Appetite, as Covetousness, or Ambition, or Luxury, or Lust, or Malice; Alas! we delight in our Masters; And then, though the Service be hard, and the Wages mean, yet we can do any thing for our Master's sake: we can watch and labour, and wait and solicit, and beg and bear, and deny our selves, and challenge Injuries, and all to content: whereas let but the same Acts be required in Religion, how uneasy and tedious do they seem? They are complain'd of as difficult, and quitted as impossible. And what now can make all this Difference, but only a different Respect for our Master? Nay we may take notice farther, That all the Services of our Lusts, however toilsome, however disquieting, however ill attended they may be, yet still nevertheless they are stiled *Pleasures*, and Men swallow them eagerly under that gilded Name. Now would we but transfer our Affections to God, how much more reasonably would his Service be stiled a *Pleasure*, and be willingly and chearfully

cheerfully undertaken, and seem easie to us in the discharge? But an ill Opinion checks all Endeavours, and benumbs all the sinews of Diligence. He, in the Parable, that conceived his Lord under the Notion of a *hard Master*, made no advance in his Service; he profited nothing at all: And how far any one else can profit under the same Circumstances, we may learn from our own sad experience; while we find that, so long as our Affection is not with God, all our Services languish into a heartless Application, and a bare unedifying Formality.

But I need say no more to commend the Duty; and perhaps it may be more worth our while to consider what are the *Hinderances* of it in common Practice.

We may observe, That *delighting in God* has *Three* main Adversaries, (*viz.*) *Inconsideration*, *Sensuality*, and *Superstition*: by reason of the *first*, Men *will* not; by reason of the *second*, they *cannot*; and by reason of the *third*, they *dare* not *delight in God*. I shall examine all these.

The *first Hinderance* is *Inconsideration*. And this is that which God chargeth the *Israelites* with,

with, as the Cause of their neglecting this Duty; in that known place of *Isaiah*, *The Oxe knoweth his owner, and the Ass his master's cribb, but Israel doth not know me*: where the word to know (according to the old Rule of Scripture-Interpretation, *Verba scientiæ connotant Affectus*), signifies to love, or take pleasure in; And then the Argument of their Reproach runs thus; The *Beasts*, which Man looks upon as much more stupid than himself, do yet own their Feeder, and love him, and take pleasure in him, and render him a willing Service: Now, says God, I feed my People as effectually as a Keeper feeds his Beast; I give them all they have, and more; I sustain their Faculties in a capacity of enjoying what I give them, and yet I have not such a Return as even the *Beasts* do make; *Israel will not love or take pleasure in me*; and the Reason of all follows, *My people will not consider*, This was the Cause; and where this Cause is, the Effect is necessary; for how is it possible we can take pleasure in that which we will not think of? *Amiableness* is properly the Parent, but *Thought* is both the *Midwife* and *Nurse* of *Desire*; and be the *Object* never so amiable and obliging,

ging, while we do not consider it, it affects us no more than if it were not at all. From this unhappy Slothfulness and Indiscretion of Mind it comes to pass, That many, though otherwise of inoffensive Lives, and moderate Appetites, and lying under no Indisposition that might hinder them from enjoying God with a proper Delight, do yet wholly defraud themselves of the Comfort of so doing, and suffer their Time to pass heavily over their heads, only for want of applying some due Portions of it to the Contemplation of God and his Goodness; which Portions of Time so applied would wonderfully lighten all the rest, and render our Lives, as much more accountable, so much more pleasurable too.

But, *Secondly*, *Sensuality* sets Men at a greater distance from *delighting in God*; in that State they *cannot* do it; And the Reason is, Because that when the Soul once comes to serve under a Complacency in things of Sense, it necessarily becomes gross and fleshly, and loses all its spiritual Taste: And thus the Wisdom of God has made it a natural Effect, That none shall be able to enjoy *Him*, who set up his Creatures in competition

tion with *Him* ; It being made above the capacity of our hearts, as well as it is beneath the Honour of God, to receive the Commerce of his Love in any other than in our largest Room. Indeed the Prophet *Isaiah*, *ch.* 58. 2. tells us of the *Israelites*, that they pretended to *delight in God*, while their Affections were extremely carnal, and set upon the World ; but this was an Affront to the Divine Majesty, which he was commanded to cry loudly against : And we may lay down this for a Rule, That of all *Hypocrites* they are the greatest, who *pretend* that they *delight in God* ; and of all *Enthusiasts* they are the highest, who *believe* that they *delight in God*, while they *dare delight* in any thing that does *offend* him. If therefore we will *delight in God*, it is necessary to draw off, at least so far, from the World, as to make our Delight in him, preside over, and moderate all the rest of our Enjoyments.

The *third Hinderance* of the Duty is *Superstition* ; which is the Vice of those that *dare not delight in God* : The word *Superstition* is sometimes taken in a greater latitude ; but I take it here in its strict and original sense to signify a *Worship of Fear* ; a *Worship*

ship of Fear proceeding from a sower and terrifying Opinion of the Nature of God. Now this unworthy *Opinion*, which is the *Parent* of *Superstition*, does sometimes grow from Principles of Doctrine received, and sometimes from bare Complexion. As for example: Supposing it to be believ'd, That God has determin'd a great part of Mankind to *Eternal Misery*, meerly to shew the Absoluteness of his Dominion: How does such a Doctrine as this detract from the *Amiable Goodness* of God; and necessarily tend to make all Mankind superstitious, fearful, and heartless; unless it be such as pretend to be secure of their own Exemption from that Decree? And yet none can be secure of this, without a particular Revelation. But my chief Aim is to speak of that *Superstition* that grows from *Complexion*: And this *Complexion* is sometimes natural, by reason of the Melancholy of Temper; and sometimes occasional, by reason of the Infirmary of *Conscience*: Now in both these Cases it is usual for the Minds of Men to suggest, That to *delight in God* is too bold a Familiarity; That as we are Creatures of a sinful Nature, and much more as we are actual Sin-

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ners,

ners, the Majesty of God requires a more awful distance of our Affections, than to be delighted in by us. But all this is no more than weakness of Thought.

For *first*, Although we cannot be too sensible of the vast Distance, that is between the Vileness of our Nature, and the Majesty of God's; Yet we must remember, that his Condescension has been pleased to void all this distance; so that though *He dwells in the highest Heavens*, yet He declares himself to dwell too with the humble spirit; and therefore if we can but keep our Spirits humble, (which is very well consistent with Delight) there is no fear of our being too Familiar.

But *secondly*, To reflect on our selves as Actual Sinners; And here indeed the Case requires a Distinction: For supposing a Sinner to retain the purposes of Sin, such a one has neither Reason nor Ground to *delight in God*, and his Pretences to do so are a direct Affront: But supposing a Sinner to turn from his Sin in Sincerity, such a one has of all others the most Reason to *delight in God*, and to love much, because much shall be forgiven him; as our Saviour argues in the Case of *Mary Magdalen*.

Magdalen. And if we consider the Passages of the returning Prodigal (in the *Parable*) and what Delight his Father express'd to receive him, we must conclude the Son to have been Unthankful, if he did not *delight* in his Father *more* after his Return, than if he had never gone astray. For, by the way, we must not have so mean a Notion of *delighting in God*, as to think it is exclusive of *Godly Sorrow*: The *Heathen* could say of true Joy, That it is not a Giggling thing, It is a Severe thing: Joy, we know, has its Tears ev'n in Nature; but it has more in Grace; and nothing better expresses our Delight in God, and nothing better advances it than Sorrow for Sin. So that, supposing a Man's Mind to be but religiously bent, there is no other Circumstance can exclude him; (exclude him did I say?) nay, can excuse him from *delighting in God*. For we must consider, That to *delight in God* is not only our Privilege, but our Duty; it being the proper Acknowledgment that is due to the Divine Goodness; and therefore whatsoever may be pretended to hinder it, can be no other than sinful and weak, because it does not only deprive us of our

Comfort, but it likewise robs God of His Due.

And now I come to,

II. The great *Motive* and *Encouragement* of this Duty, *He shall give thee thy Heart's desire.*

It was a very large Promise the Devil once made, when, pointing at all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glories thereof, he cry'd, *All this will I give thee*; and yet had he had power to make his words good, the Overture had been short of this in the Text: For we see that they who have the greatest share in the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glories of them, have still an Emptiness of Heart; and complain of as many Wants, and Troubles, and Disappointments, as are to be met with in meaner Fortunes; and therefore it is evident, That to have our *Heart's Desire*, is a greater Boon, than all the Pomp and Affluence of the World is able to contribute. Now were so large and obliging a Promise as this is, not to be fulfilled till the future Life, it were well worth the waiting for: but yet God has provided more indulgently for those that love him:
Godliness

Godlineſſ has the Promiſes of this Life, as well as of that which is to come ; and this in the Text has peculiar Reſpect to this Life ; and therefore I ſhall only treat of it in reference to its Accompliſhment here ; and ſhew how, and in what manner the Goodneſſ of God will infallibly make it good to every one that delights in Him.

When a Man ſhall hear of ſuch an Overture as this, *Thou ſhalt have thy Heart's deſire ;* It is natural for him immediately to conſult his Heart, and ſee what Deſires he has there, thronging forth at the Hopes of their Accompliſhment : And there perhaps he may find the Deſire of *Ahab*, to enlarge his Poſſeſſions ; or the Deſire of *Amnon*, to compaſs his Luſt ; or the Deſire of *Haman*, to gratifie his Pride and Revenge. I mention theſe Inſtances particularly ; becauſe they may afford us ſome farther matter of Inſtruction. For we may obſerve of theſe *Three* Men, that though one of them was a King, and the other was a King's Son, and the third a King's chief Minion or Favourite ; yet each of them accounted himſelf an unhappy Man, till ſuch time as he could compaſs his particular Deſire ; They could neither eat,
nor

nor drink, nor sleep without it; notwithstanding all the Greatness of their other Circumstances: And, from their Example, I would have you take notice of one mischievous Errour, that all Mankind is prone to; *i. e.* We are all apt to think, that our *present Desires* are necessary to make us happy, and that we cannot be happy without them: And yet we may farther observe of the same *Three*, That those very Desires which they look'd on, as necessary to make them happy, were the express Cause of each of their undoing: And in like manner I conclude, concerning the generality of Mankind, That however they esteem the Accomplishment of their *present Desires*, as necessary to make them happy, yet it is so far from it, that if God should give them their Desires, they would certainly be undone. If the Intemperate Man had his Desire, he would have more Health; and, if he had, what would follow, but only that he would be more Intemperate? If the Ambitious Man had his Desire, he would have more Honour; and, if he had, what would follow, but only that he would be more Insolent? The Contentious Man would have more Authority; and,

and, if he had, what would follow, but only that he would be more Injurious? The Scoffer would have more Wit; and, if he had, what would follow, but only that he would be more abusive? In a word; If all Men (speaking of them in their ordinary natural State) had their Desires, they would only have more room and more means for more Guilt; and how far would this be from making of them happy? We may therefore lay down this for a certain Rule, That so long as our Desires are any way loose and irregular, though then they be a Torment while they are not satisfied; yet they would be a greater mischief if they were satisfied: and therefore it is *pure Mercy* in God that he does deny them. When therefore it is said, That God will *give a man his heart's desire*, it must necessarily be understood, That the Man's Desire must first be regulated before it be given him; otherwise the giving of it would be a Curse.

To clear the whole Matter we need only examine the full Meaning of this Expression, *He shall give thee thy heart's desire*: Were such a Promise made us by a Man, we should expect

expect no less from it, than the full satisfaction and accomplishment of our Desires; And be sure we may expect the same from God; for there is no Sophistry in the Divine Promises: But when we consider that God who makes this Promise, has power to govern the Heart, and order the Desires, as well as to procure those outward Issues that are necessary to their Satisfaction, we must of right interpret the words to bear a farther sense, and that is this; *He shall give thee thy heart's desire, i. e.* He shall give thee first the Desire it self, and then the Accomplishment of it: This therefore is the full sense of the Words (*viz.*) That when we apply our selves to the Point of *delighting in God*, he will form and order all the Movements of our Hearts, and teach us to desire such things as are safe, and *then* he will fulfill our Desires. And let not any Carnal Imagination cry within it self, I am defeated, if my Desires must be changed, for how shall I be happy without the present? The Case is just the same when a Man lies heated with a Feaver; His Thirst calls for mighty Draughts, and he thinks nothing else can content him; and when the Physician, instead

stead of a mighty draught, offers him some little thing of a very different appearance, he looks upon it as a provoking disappointment; but after Application, when he comes to find his Thirst allay'd, and so his Desire changed, and withal his Disease abated; ask him then what defeat there is (in the Change of his Desire.

The truth is, that while our Desires are in our own hands and management, it is impossible we should be happy: for so long as they are unsatisfied we feel a sensible Unhappiness from them, nor should be less unhappy if they were satisfied so long as they are unsafe: But when our Desires are in God's hands, to be managed and formed by him, we cannot but be happy; for they will be made such as are fit to be fulfilled, and then certainly be fulfilled.

The only thing remaining is, To shew in what Method this shall be done: And thus it is; Whenever the Grace of God has its proper work upon our Hearts, it will effectually reduce the multitude of our Desires to these *Two*. (*Viz.*)

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1. It will make us desire God himself chiefly, as the Chiefest Good ; and,

2. It will make us desire all other inferior good things with Submission to God's Will.

1. The Desire of God himself will become the *first* and masterly and governing Desire of our Soul ; the Desire of Importunity and humble Violence resolving not to be denied : *One thing have I desired, which I will require ; which I will insist upon, which I will not forego, says the good Man ; and that is, That God will communicate himself unto me : And when this Desire is once come to be rooted and habitual, the Heart will be so fill'd, and heal'd, and strengthen'd by it ; that (as when a powerful Medicine is given to a Leper) the multitude of our common Desires will drop off like the Scabs of our natural Itch. Indeed we may observe ev'n from the Instances that are vicious, how one Desire, when grown masterly and governing, will be able to suspend the Actings of all other, and fill, and take up the whole Soul : Ex. gr. Let a Man set his Heart upon the Love of Money ; This Desire will be*

be able to wean him from all other Desires; and from all regards either to Vertue or Credit, or even to Pleasure it self; and so long as this one Desire is thriving, he will account himself an entirely happy Man: Thus it is when a Man makes Treasure his God; and how much more happily will it be so? How much more happily will one Desire fill, and take up the whole Soul, when a Man shall make God his Treasure?

But *Grace* requires not that *Nature* should be extinguished, and therefore there is always lawful Room for a *Second Desire*, i. e.

2. The Desire of Temporal good things, such as are Health, and Ease, and Liberty, and other Conveniencies of Life: But then this in the good Man is a Desire of Submission and Resignation, and resolved Acquiescence in the Will and Pleasure of God: For this Reason, Because, although it be lawful for any Man to desire these things, yet it is beyond the Wisdom of the wisest Man in the World to know, whether the Enjoying of these things would be best for him; nay, whether it would be simply safe. There is one Consideration, that is reasonably suffi-

cient to make us distrust and be jealous of all our natural Desires, however just and regular they may be in appearance ; and that is this ; It is certain, that if we should have our Desires, though never so honest, yet they would quite evacuate and set aside the Cross of Christ ; for we should never desire Wants, and Chastisements, and Afflictions : Now he that thinks the Cross of Christ an unnecessary Imposition ; or that Wants, and Chastisements, and Afflictions are not sometimes *best* for us ; neither understands himself, nor the designs of God upon him for his Good. God only knows what is best for us, and what the State of our Passions can bear at all times to the best Advantage : And his absolute Promise extending thus far, That he will give like a Father to each of his dutiful Children, ὅσον χρήσῃ, as much as he needeth, or as much as is useful and fit ; the good Christian takes it for a Demonstration, That what God gives him not, is not fit for him.

Upon this state of Mind it follows, That whoever *delights in God*, he has effectually his *Heart's Desire* : For in the supreme Desire

fire of his Heart he cannot miscarry; God will be undoubtedly *his*; he already tastes his Goodness, and rejoices in it: And in his inferiour Desires of Worldly Comforts, he is secure from disappointment, because he makes God's Will the measure of his own: So that if he chance to want the desirable things of Life, he cries to himself, *These things indeed are Good, but God is Better*; and upon this Rule he establishes his Content. And, on the other side, when he enjoys the desirable things of Life, he cries to himself, *These things indeed are Good, but blessed be God that he hath better things than these in store*; and with this Rule he both moderates his Appetite, and doubles his Enjoyment.

Now how can any one desire more than this, To be at the same time Content, and Joyful, and Safe? I am sure this is more than any one can obtain from the World, though he had the World more at his Will than ever yet any Man had. And yet he that *delights in God* shall never fail of this, To be both Content, and Joyful, and Safe.

And

And, I think, I need not alledge any more to prove, That *Delight in God* brings along with it the fullest Accomplishment of Humane Desires.

And thou, O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men; Grant unto thy People, That they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; That so, among the sundry Changes of the World, our Hearts may surely there be fixed where true Joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

F I N I S.

*Books Printed for Walter Kettilby at the
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